

Zoning Ordinance

Section 5-1200 Sign Regulations.

5-1201 Purpose.

It is determined that the primary purpose of signage is to help people find what they need without difficulty or confusion, and without adverse impact on the visual character of an area. Thus, while not restricting the freedom of expression, regulations are hereby established for controlling the number, design, and location of signs, for treating similar types of signs consistently, and for preventing an overload of graphic messages or displays in the environment of Loudoun County. Signs are subordinate to the structures and land use functions they reference. Signs are to be considered accessory components of an overall composition of architectural elements, not as freestanding or dominant architectural elements by themselves. This Section establishes standards for the erection, display, safety, and maintenance of signs which are intended to convey graphic messages; encourage the general attractiveness, historic quality, and unique character of Loudoun County, and protect property values therein.

Revised General Plan Preface

“At the start of this new millennium, we, the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors (BOS), envision Loudoun County as a prominent, sustainable community; as the global crossroads of the information technology industry and with a vibrant rural economy; preserving our historic and environmental heritage and the character of our towns and neighborhoods; fostering a strong sense of community, with robust economic, educational and recreational activity, recognized as a superb place for families and individuals to live, learn, work, worship, invest and visit.” (BOS Vision Statement Adopted March 20, 2000).

On January 5, 2000, the Board of Supervisors directed the Loudoun County Planning Commission to undertake a comprehensive review of the 1991 *General Plan* and *Countywide Transportation Plan* (CTP) and other supporting documents and ordinances that together comprise the Loudoun County Comprehensive Plan. The purpose was to address issues posed by unprecedented growth and change in the County, particularly over the last decade. The Supervisors expressed confidence in the general direction of policies in the existing planning documents. However, since the adoption of the 1991 Plan, the timing, character and location of new development, as well as questions about the County’s continuing ability to serve this growing community, have become pressing concerns.

The Board directed the Planning Commission to strengthen the *General Plan* policies and methods of implementation in order to ensure the long-term fiscal balance of the County; to protect its environment and rural resources; to create high-quality communities; and to provide an adequate level of public services and facilities. As a framework for the Comprehensive Plan Update and Review process, the Commissioners formulated the following set of nine Smart Growth and Revitalization principles that are endorsed by the Board of Supervisors:

1. Ensure Loudoun is environmentally sound – protecting, sustaining, and enhancing the County’s air quality, water resources, soils, landscape, wildlife, and other natural and man-made resources, including the historic and archaeological heritage, to benefit both present and future generations.
2. Promote and sustain an efficient, strong, diverse, and resilient economy: an economy based on Loudoun’s comparative advantage for a variety of economic activities because of its location and its natural and human resources, an economy capable of generating productive jobs for Loudoun’s work force, and of contributing its share of the public revenue stream needed for the efficient management of Loudoun’s growth.
3. Create distinct, well-designed and serviced residential and mixed-use communities (including the revitalization of older communities), rural areas, towns, and corridors with the essential supporting hierarchy of roads and transit networks to comprise the overall planned structure of Loudoun’s territory, consistent with Loudoun’s overall objectives.
4. Seek the development of neighborhoods within Loudoun’s communities designed or revitalized in conformance with the natural environment, which provide a mix of housing types, are pedestrian friendly, safe, with access to transportation choices, quality utility services, public and/or private amenities and services, and are conveniently located to schools, daily shopping outlets, and job opportunities.
5. Ensure rural residential development that maintains rural character, preserves the environment, water quality, and natural features, and develops at overall densities that do not exceed the capacity of rural roads and public facilities, or compromise the growth of the rural economy.
6. Provide Loudoun’s households the opportunity for a diverse, stimulating social, cultural, recreational, and spiritual environment; and access to quality public facilities and services, including quality education.
7. Recognize the private property rights of the individual within a balanced framework that considers the public interest and shared values of the community.
8. Link the County’s development and revitalization with financial policies that assess fiscal impact, provide an equitable distribution of the costs of development between direct beneficiaries and the citizens at large, maintain acceptable levels of taxes and fees, reflect sound debt management, and provide for potential economic uncertainties and risk.
9. Represent Loudoun’s interests within regional forums and with other governments and organizations to resolve issues of mutual concern that extend beyond Loudoun’s borders.